We claim:

1. A computer-implemented method for at least a firewall comprising:

filtering a request in a first phase to verify only at least one of: that the request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that a command of the request is allowable; that a length of the request does not exceed an allowable maximum for the command of the request; that characters of the request are of an allowable type; and,

upon verification by filtering the request in the first phase, filtering the request in a second phase particular to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant to verify at least one of: a source, a destination, and content of the request relative to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant; and,

otherwise, denying the request.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

upon verification by filtering the request in the second phase, passing the request; and,

otherwise, denying the request.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein filtering the request in the first phase comprises filtering the request in the first phase to verify only that the request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that the command of the request is allowable; that the length of the request does not exceed the allowable maximum for the command of the request; and that the characters of the request are of an allowable type.

15

4. The method of claim 1, wherein filtering the request in the second phase comprises filtering the request in the second phase to verify the source, the destination and the content of the request relative to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant.

5. A machine-readable medium having instructions stored thereon for execution by a
5   processor to perform a method for at least a firewall comprising:

    filtering a request in a first phase to verify only at least one of: that the request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that a command of the request is allowable; that a length of the request does not exceed an allowable maximum for the command of the request; that characters of the request are of an allowable type;

10   upon verification by filtering the request in the first phase,

    filtering the request in a second phase particular to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant to verify at least one of: a source, a destination, and content of the request relative to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant;

    upon verification by filtering the request in the second phase, passing the request;

15   otherwise, denying the request; and,

    otherwise, denying the request.

6. The medium of claim 5, wherein filtering the request in the first phase comprises filtering the request in the first phase to verify only that the request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that the command of the request is allowable; that the length of the
20   request does not exceed the allowable maximum for the command of the request; and that the characters of the request are of an allowable type.

7. The medium of claim 5, wherein filtering the request in the second phase comprises filtering the request in the second phase to verify the source, the destination and the content of the request relative to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant.

8. A computerized system comprising:

a first phase filtering mechanism designed to verify only at least one of: that a request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that a command of the request is allowable; that a length of the request does not exceed an allowable maximum for the command of the request; that characters of the request are of an allowable type; and,

10   at least one second phase filtering mechanism, each mechanism particular to a different supported protocol and designed to verify at least one of: a source, a destination, and content of the request relative to the supported protocol to which the mechanism is particular,

wherein the first phase filtering mechanism upon verification is to pass the request to a second phase filtering mechanism particular to the supported protocol to which the

15   request is pursuant.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the first phase filtering mechanism and the at least one second phase filtering mechanism are implemented within a single firewall.

10. The system of claim 8, wherein the first phase filtering mechanism is implemented within a firewall, and the at least one second phase filtering mechanism are implemented

20   within another server.

17

11. The system of claim 8, wherein each of the first phase filtering mechanism and the at least one second phase filtering mechanism is implemented within a different server.

12. The system of claim 8, wherein each of the at least one second phase filtering mechanism comprises an instance of a protocol server object.

5   13. The system of claim 8, wherein the second phase filtering mechanism particular to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant upon verification is to pass the request, and otherwise is to deny the request.

14. The system of claim 8, wherein the first phase filtering mechanism is designed to verify only that the request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that the command of the

10   request is allowable; that the length of the request does not exceed an allowable maximum for the command of the request; and that the characters of the request are of an allowable type.

15. The system of claim 8, wherein each second phase filtering mechanism is designed to verify the source, the destination, and the content of the request relative to the supported

15   protocol to which the mechanism is particular.

16. The system of claim 8, wherein each of the first phase filtering mechanism and the at least one second phase filtering mechanism comprises a computer program executed by a processor from a computer-readable medium.

17. A computerized system comprising:

first means for verifying only at least one of: that a request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that a command of the request is allowable; that a length of the request does not exceed an allowable maximum for the command of the request; that characters of the

5   request are of an allowable type; and,

at least one second means, each second means particular to a different supported protocol and for verifying at least one of: a source, a destination, and content of the request relative to the supported protocol to which the means is particular,

wherein the first means upon verification passes the request to a second means

10   particular to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant; and,

otherwise, denying the request.

18. The system of claim 17, wherein the second means particular to the supported protocol to which the request is pursuant upon verification passes the request, and otherwise denies the request.

15   19. The system of claim 17, wherein the first means verifies that the request is pursuant to a supported protocol; that the command of the request is allowable; that the length of the request does not exceed an allowable maximum for the command of the request; and that the characters of the request are of an allowable type.

20. The system of claim 17, wherein each second means verifies the source, the

20   destination, and the content of the request relative to the supported protocol to which the means is particular.

19